



DPPSCS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING DIVISION CAREER BRIEF #8

Achieving Personal Success

When looking at developing your maximum potential, either in your professional or personal lives, one of the most pertinent realizations one usually has is that there is no single formula or method that outlines the path to personal success. Everyone has different goals, priorities and dreams which, in turn, means that different activities and attitudes will make us feel good about ourselves. We also have different strengths and weaknesses, some we are aware of, and some that have yet to surface. How then, as individuals, can we feel successful in our lives?

Some would say the most effective way to achieve personal success is to begin with a personal mission statement, or said another way, develop the end result and strive to achieve. We have all heard of organizational mission statements, but what exactly are they? Mission statements are designed to provide direction and momentum to an organization, or a permanent statement of purpose. A mission statement acts as an invisible hand that guides the people in the organization and is a constant reminder of the reason for organizational being, or simply put, answers the question "What business are we in?"

A personal mission statement can achieve the same results. Writing a personal mission statement offers individuals an opportunity to determine what is most important and identify core values and beliefs. A compelling mission can help you succeed, be more satisfied with your life, and get the most out of your experiences. A personal mission statement is developed by focusing on the qualities that make you unique, who you are, what you would like to do, your hopes, dreams, wishes and even fears. It can be elaborate or extremely ambitious, or it can be simple, but most importantly, it is ever-changing. As the world around us changes, sometimes rapidly, it is our core values and beliefs that allow us to adapt to or resist change. Having a personal mission statement or purposeful goals can sometimes allow us as individuals to adapt to change. So how do you draft a personal mission statement? Start with these three simple questions.

■ Identify Past Successes

Spend some quality alone time identifying examples where you have had personal success in recent years. These successes could be within your place of business, community, home, church or any other venue. Write these down and try to identify if there is a common theme.

■ **Identify Core Values and Beliefs**

We each have our own core values that can make us happy and guidelines that determine whether we feel successful or not. We have core values that we live by everyday, and these values determine how we feel at any given time. Develop a list of characteristics with which you identify. There are dozens of things that we value in our lives. The list can be as long as you need. Once your list is complete, see if you can narrow your values to four or five most important values.

■ **Identify Goals**

Spend some time contemplating about those things that are most important to you. By identifying where you see yourself going in the next one, two, or ten years, you can write a mission statement that accurately reflects your goals. This list could be personal or professional goals. Try breaking down the goals into specific areas such as family, financial, spiritual or educational. Setting goals in each area of life can assist in producing a more balanced life as you begin to examine and change the stress of everyday living. Also, try to write your goals in a positive tone. Your goals should also be outlined in both the short term (3-5 years) and long term (8-10 years) and should be reviewed frequently.

With these three areas identified, it should be clear on what mental model your personal mission statement is based. However, a mental conception of your personal mission statement is not enough. You must write it down on paper and place it somewhere where you can see it every day. Use the above information and draft your statement. Once you have completed the draft, walk away and revisit it sometime in the near future to make sure it accurately reflects the way you feel. If it needs to be changed or modified over time, make the change. Most importantly, keep your mission statement sharply focused in your mind and let it be your guide to personal success.

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

~Oliver Wendell Holmes~

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